

REMARKS

Summary of the Office Action

Claims 1-3, 8-20 are pending in this application.

Claims 1-3, 8 and 9 have been rejected as obvious over U.S. Patent No. 6,120,534 to Ruiz ("Ruiz") in view of European Patent No. 0 779 062 to Glastra et al. (Glastra").

Claims 1-3, 8, 9, and 13-15 have been rejected as obvious over Glastra in view of German Patent No. 195 09 464 to Jäger ("Jäger").

Claims 10-12, and 16-20 have been rejected as obvious over Glastra in view of Jäger and further in view of U.S. patent No. 5,695,498 to Tower ("Tower").

Applicant's Response

Applicant has amended independent claim 1 to patentably distinguish the present invention over the prior art of record. In particular, independent claim 1 has been amended to recite that the **stent-catheter arrangement** includes a stent that has an essentially tubular section in the contracted state and that is deployed by a preformed balloon to achieve a shape that tapers in the central section to provide a segment of reduced diameter. The stent is coated with an impermeable material, so to channel a bodily fluid and force it to increase speed by flowing through the reduced diameter section. Support for these recitations is provided, e.g., in FIGS. 1-3 and in paragraphs [0003], [0007], and [0022].

The combination of Ruiz and Glastra does not teach, disclose or suggest the claimed invention. Ruiz is directed at a **stent** formed to a continuously curved profile that gradually transitions between a first diameter and a second diameter. See, e.g., claim 1, describing the continuously curved profile. The

stent in Ruiz may be **preformed** and deployed to assume enlarged semi-spherical ends by using a **two spherical balloons**, or tubular and deployed to assume a single conical end using a **single conical balloon**. See, e.g., FIGS. 2A and 3, and FIGS. 5C-5C. On the contrary, applicant's invention includes the use of a **single balloon shaped like a double funnel** to deploy the stent to the desired shape with enlarged tapered ends. For the foregoing reasons, the combination of Ruiz and Glastra does not teach, disclose or suggest the claimed structure.

Neither does the combination of Glastra and Jäger teach, disclose or suggest the claimed structure. The Examiner has admitted that Glastra alone does not teach the claimed structure. Jäger is directed at a **preformed stent** with tapered sections and a constriction in the central portion **for filtering blood** against thrombus. See, e.g., col. 4, l. 13. Applicant respectfully submits that the Examiner may have misapprehended the meaning of reference numeral 6 in Jäger, which is related to **a blood-resistant coating** on the stent to avoid the build-up of "Hyperplasien" that may eventually block the flow of blood. See, e.g., col. 5, ll. 8-13. If coating 6 in FIG. 11 was sealing, all blood would be forced to flow through narrow constriction 5, defeating the filtering objective. For the foregoing reasons, the combination of Glastra and Jäger does not teach, disclose or suggest the claimed structure.

The combination of Glastra, Jäger and Tower does also not teach, disclose or suggest the claimed invention. Glastra and Jäger have been discussed above. Tower is directed to a balloon that inflates at the terminal sections first to retain the stent in position, and then uniformly to fully deploy the stent, contrary to applicant's invention. See, e.g., col. 2, ll. 3-14.

Applicant respectfully submits that claim 1, as now amended, is not anticipated by the prior art of record. Withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

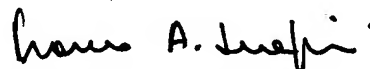
Moreover, applicant believes that the dependent claims 2-3, 8, 10, 13, and 16 are also allowable over the prior art of record in that they depend from independent claim 1, and therefore are allowable for the reasons stated above. Additionally, dependent claims 2-3, 8, 10, 13, and 16 are allowable because they include additional limitations. Thus, applicant believes that since the prior art of record does not anticipate independent claim 1, neither does the prior art anticipate the dependent claims.

Applicant has canceled claims 9, 11-12, 14-15, and 17-20 and submits herewith new claims 21-24, which are directed to additional features of the inventive stent-catheter arrangement. The new claims are fully supported in the specification, e.g., in paragraphs [0010]-[0012].

In view of the foregoing amendment and comments, applicant respectfully submits that the application is now in condition for allowance. Reexamination and reconsideration of the pending claims are respectfully requested.

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Respectfully submitted,



Franco A. Serafini
Reg. No. 52,207
Attorney for Applicants
LUCE, FORWARD,
HAMILTON & SCRIPPS, LLP
11988 El Camino Real, Suite 200
San Diego, California 92130
Tel: (858) 720-6368
Fax: (858) 523-4326